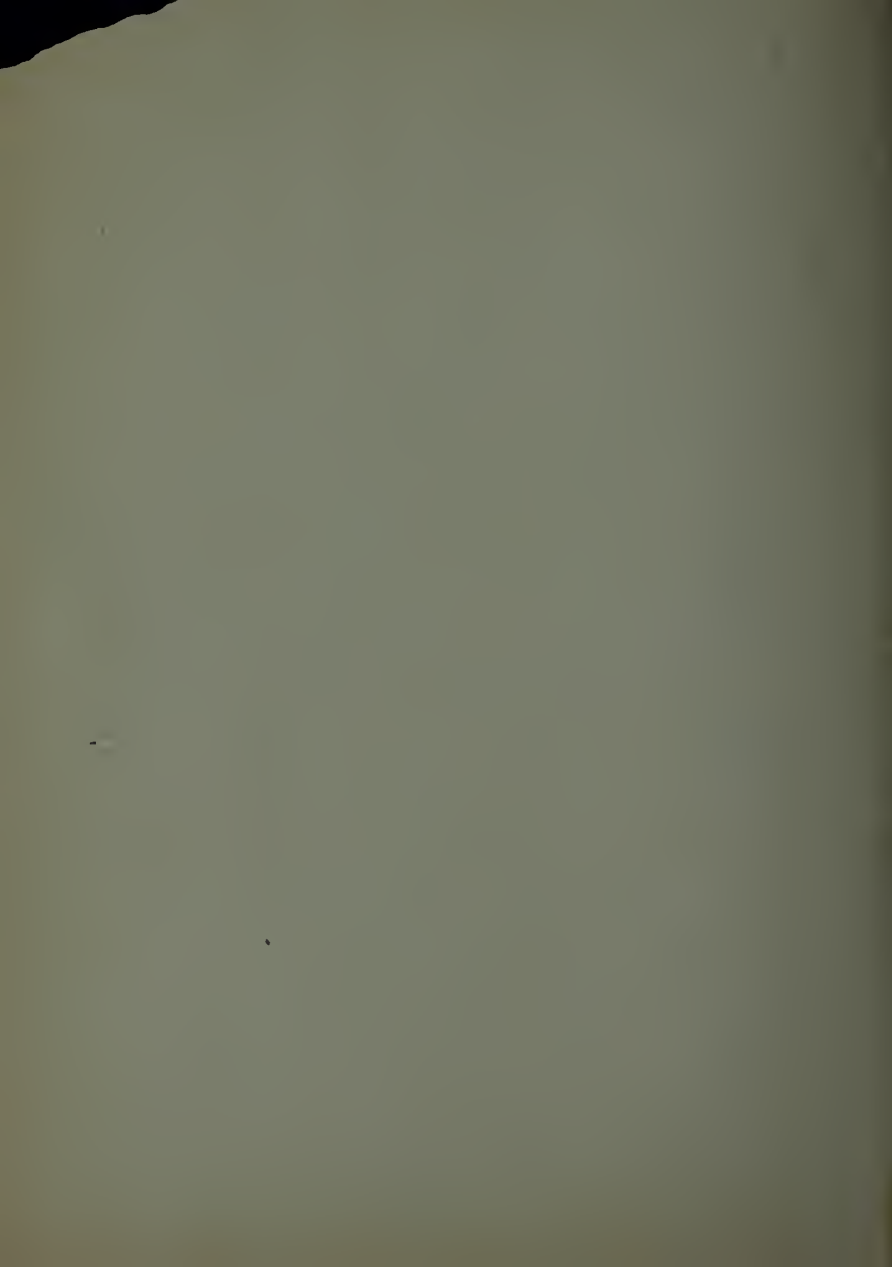
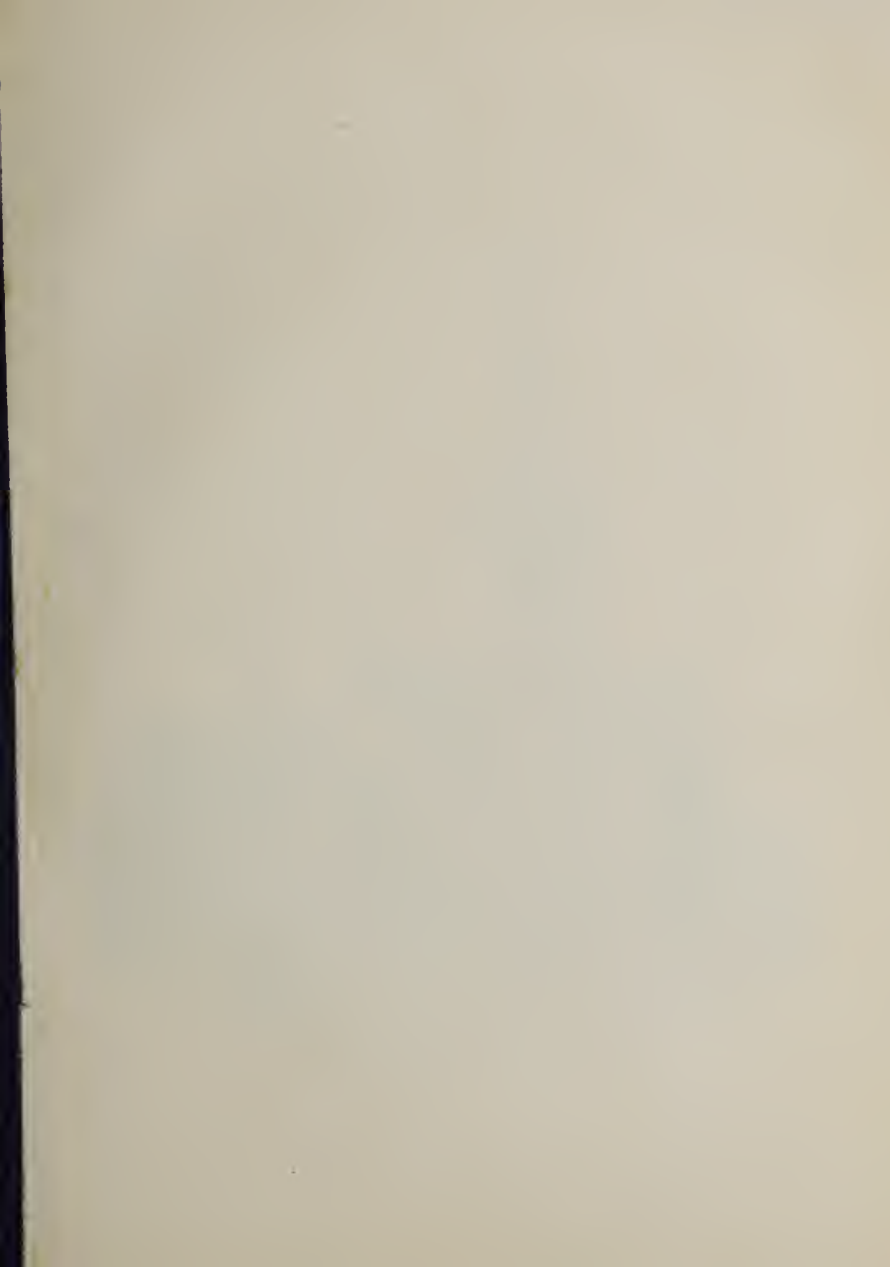


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The Great Religions of India

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CENTRAL CHURCH, BRIDGETON, N. J.



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No.

HINDUISM,

BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM,

The Great Religions of India.

By REV. JOHN HANDLEY, A. B.,
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PREFACE.

THE papers included in this little volume were originally prepared under the scholarly and inspiring instruction of Professor F. F. Ellinwood, D.D., in a course taken in the University of the City of New York, in Comparative Religion.

Afterward, by the request of the Rev. J. B. Graw, D.D., the excellent Editor of the "Epworth Advocate," of the New Jersey Conference, they were prepared for and published in that paper, and very kindly commended by him.

The researches in Comparative Religions undertaken by the writer, have been of incomparable interest and lasting good to him.

It is his only intent to impress upon the reader the truth that God is mysteriously, but surely, working out the redemption of the human race.

February 24, 1891.

The Religions of India.

India the Great Battlefield of Religions.

TO the casual observer and superficial reader in ancient history, India is a land of mysticism. It holds about the same relation to the modern world that Egypt held to the Grecians—a land of superstition, of weird spectres; a land of the blackness of darkness and of the abomination of desolation, from whence can come nothing but fear, terror, injury, and the lowest kind of heathenism. But to the real Christian student, India stands forth as the monument of religious thought enlightening the whole world. As the fog of ignorance is dissolved by the light of history, so through the study of comparative religion India is revealed as the common and greatest battlefield of religions. From all accounts the Indo-Aryan people, like the primitive nations of pre-historic times, held to Monotheism, or a belief in the existence and personality of but one God. But through wars, famines and divisions, the people were degraded into Polytheism and idolatry; then they wandered far away

in the wilderness of Pantheism, losing all sight of God above them, the land of promise before them, and of the golden age of their ancestors behind them. The history of the children of Israel going from their home land into captivity, then out of bondage into the wilderness, and then moving towards the land of Canaan, is a picture of the human heart in its fall and struggle out of sin, and of the moral fall and rise of nations. No better proof of the truthfulness of this statement need or could be presented than the struggle of these Indo-Aryans after God's spirituality and a correct system of religious truth. This is the reason why India is the arena of such a fearful religious and ecclesiastical battle. All the isms of the Orient have conflicted and combatted with each other here upon the fertile plain of the Ganges.

We first find Hinduism, whose system of religion is derived from a poetical work—"The Veda," a book of poems which is older than the "Iliad" of Homer, and from which Arnold largely received his inspiration to write his "Light of Asia." The next is Brahmanism, whose cold-hearted caste system crushed the moral life out of the masses. Then came Buddhism, with its dark belief of Atheism, and of the final annihilation of the soul, and of the futility of prayer. The doctrine of Zoroaster, which is a spiritual idealism, something like the tenets held by the Essenes, intermingled itself among these religions. Mohammedanism, with its strange sensualistic features, was

introduced in the early part of the Christian Era. To-day, all of these religions are contending with each other for the ascendancy, so that India, as no other country, has had to submit to heterodoxy, orthodoxy, and the darkest of heathenism. Great interest is now being manifested in the hope that Christianity, the last to come upon the field of battle, will slowly but surely subjugate these inimical systems.

Early Hinduism.

THE Persians not being able to pronounce the word Aryan, called the Aryans Hindus; then the Greeks dropped the letter H and called these Aryans Indoi; from the latter we get the term India.

Comparatively speaking, very little was known about the Hindus before the year 327 B. C., when Alexander invaded this country, marching as far as the Indus river. A Grecian by the name of Magasthenes collected the information, of which ancient and modern writers availed themselves.

India is cut up into a great many little provinces or states, with no unity between them; this diisunity has created over five hundred and thirty-nine different languages and dialects. The missionary has to master these various tongues before he can communicate with the inhabitants.

All the information that we have touching the condition, character and intelligence of the earliest Hindus we derive from their traditions, from philology, and from their Vedas. These inform us that they began life on a very high plane of civilization, and that a system somewhat similar to the Patriarchal was in vogue, and that they were capable of solving philosophical problems (for which India has always been noted), and dealing with the highest ideas of Monotheism. But the Hindus soon lost their first estate and wandered off into weakness and awful ignorance. It is from the Vedas, which are their Scriptures, that we gain an idea of the character of their religion. These Vedas are four in number: the Yagust, the Rig, the Saman, and the Atharvan. The term Veda means science or law. They are supposed to be a divine revelation. The Rig is the oldest, and is made up of hymns; the others are liturgical and dogmatical. The Vedas are not a spontaneous outgrowth of thought, nor are they an evolution of thought, for they were composed at distant and isolated periods of time, in different ways and by different men. As they reflect the ideal domestic, civil and religious life of the primitive life of the Hindus before the Caste system was introduced, it looks as if they were a revision of very early beliefs, modified by many an interpolation. It is difficult to state the creed of the Vedas, as features and characteristics are to be found in them of all Oriental

beliefs. These books have had a powerful influence over the people of India.

The Vedas say: "There is in truth but one deity and one supreme spirit, the Lord of the Universe, whose work is the universe; the God above all gods, who created the heavens, the earth and the waters." But soon after we see that this pure doctrine is enveloped in the mystic shroud of Pantheism, Absorbition and Fatalism.

There are five kinds of sacrifices referred to in Hinduism: the offering of the plant, of clarified butter, of fire, of animals, and the offering of human beings. The juices of the soma plant were the promises of renewed life and the quickening of immortal life, for as by the death of the plant the fires of the universe that had gathered in it were set free to wing their flight through a resurrected life, so would man, by death, be liberated and elevated. The offering of clarified butter was as the first fruit offering, originating in their simple consciousness of dependence on a Supreme Being. They offered fire as the purest element of the life of man and the light of nature. The fire symbolized the ascendant character and struggle of man's aspirations. Thousands of animals were sacrificed daily. We are hardly able to account for the origin and cause of human sacrifice; possibly it originated in the Veda, which stated that the Creator (Varuna) offered as a sacrifice for humanity his first-born son. Who knows but that the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world"

impressed upon the Hindu mind the doctrine of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?

It is strange to find that these Hindus who had no special revelation, had the idea of expiatory sacrifice; has this doctrine by the fall been inwrought into the soul of man's being? Their offerings were made to appease the anger of the gods and to gain their favor. The one who offered became identified with his sacrifice, as if he himself was being offered up, and his immortal part, which fire could only purify and not consume, ascended with the flame to the regions above, to enjoy companionship with the gods. The Hindu thought that the majority of the gods secured their immortality through sacrifice and suffering.

From what we learn of sacrifice, in India, in contemporaneous nations and in modern history, we notice that this idea is inherent in man, originating in a sense of worship, weakness, dependence, and also of guilt that must be atoned for. The human victim considered it an honor to be sacrificed; he looked upon it as a golden opportunity to consecrate himself to his supreme thought, that he might attain to the character of his ideal. It afforded the means of reaching immediately the departed blessed, of securing a noble destiny in the celestial world. Only the choicest and best were allowed to be sacrificed. Truly we must admire the purpose of these Hindus, while we deprecate the method used to gain heaven.

May the day be not far distant when these so-called heathens, who have some idea of the doctrines of the fall of man, of the immortality of the soul, the reality of heaven, and the need of a divine sacrifice to atone for sin, shall accept the Christ who, having been lifted up upon the cross, is drawing all men unto Him.

The Caste System.

NO subject has been brought more prominently before the church than the Caste System of India, which system has been considered by very many missionaries, the greatest obstacle to the progress of Christianity among the Hindus.

Christian scholars are trying to discover the nature of the Caste System, that it may be overcome. The following facts and features relating to this subject are of vital interest to those who are anxious to see the church succeed.

We cannot find any trace of cast in the earliest Veda; from this the conclusion is reached that before the Aryans migrated from Central Asia into India, the system did not exist.

It appears that at one time India was without inhabitants; its first inhabitants came down from the high plains

of Asia; the enervating climate of India and its peculiar environment weakened the Aryans, morally and mentally, and darkened their fair complexion (the term Aryan means fairest, noblest), and the long lapse of ages continued this process of deterioration, so that those who were in India the longest, were the most degraded; hence a distinction and a discrimination would be developed between the earlier and the later comers; and as the word caste meant color, this difference of gradation may have been the origin of the Caste System.

Tradition makes it quite evident that the white Aryan invaders of India were deeply prejudiced against these swarthy aborigines, and treated them with the utmost contempt. But there came a time when migration ceased, and the longer the invaders remained in India the more they became like the people who had preceded them and whom they had conquered.

Some sort of government had to be worked out, while society was most naturally forming itself into different classes according to the peculiarities, affinities and tendencies of each and all; and as this principle of classification, contraction and separation continued, a spirit of disinclination of one class to associate with the other classes would be developed; therefore, it was only a question of time when the principle of separatism would cause an impassable gulf to exist between the different classes which ultimately produced the Caste System.

Others think that the natural division of the Hindus into farmers, servants, priests and soldiers, originated this system. All Oriental governments favored castes, because the democratic ideas of civil and religious liberty and of the equality of men were absolutely foreign to all their national polity. Greece was the pioneer nation in giving expression to this great thought, which has revolutionized European governments.

I think the abominable hierarchical system of Brahmanism brought it to its present state of awful perfection.

It would not be fair to impress you with the idea that everything said about the Caste System is said in condemnation of it, as the following will show that it has its friends :

Robertson, Dubois and Dr. Colebrook declare that it was possible to go from the lowest to the highest caste, or from that to the lowest; the system was like that of the British army, which was formed by drawing from all other classes. Heeren and Klaproth contend that it is founded on the original diversity of the human race. Others go so far as to say that the arts and industries were aided by this system.

Without a dissenting voice our Christian missionaries declare that it has created an impassable gulf between the higher and lower classes; that the system has put a heavy yoke upon the ignorant, the weak and upon the less fair, and that all opportunity for self-improvement, and for hu-

mane and general progress has been removed. They also assert that until this nefarious system is removed there is but little hope for the emancipation and conversion of the people.

If our missionaries open schools for the lowest caste and the outcast, then the higher castes will not come near them; if they should open for the higher caste, and one of the low caste children should enter the school and the Christian teacher should invite him to remain as a scholar, all of the others would leave immediately. There are, I am glad to say, some exceptions to this rule. While the Methodist church is doing much to reach and save the higher castes, as is seen in the conversion of men like Ram Chandra Bose, still true to her noble mission and great destiny, she is doing much to save the lowest castes and the outcasts. Like the Saviour she is seeking the wandering and the lost sheep. Christ's method of building up the kingdom of God on earth is from the bottom up to the top, from the lowest to the highest, from the least to the greatest, from the poorest to the richest; any other method than this will fail to accomplish the will of God on earth.

The time will come when the light of the Occident will chase away the gloom and the darkness of the Orient. The day is not far distant when the Wise Men of the West will return the generosity of the Wise Men of the East by taking their gold, frankincense and myrrh to brighten, cheer and save these Hindu caste-cursed people.

Brahmanism.

BRAHMANISM grew out of early Hinduism, just as Roman Catholicism grew out of early Christianity. Dr. F. F. Ellinwood states that "from the 8th century till about 500 B. C., a strict and oppressive sacerdotalism was enforced by the Brahmans aided by the power of caste, which might be termed Brahmanism." This is one of the very few systems of religion that did not originate in the mind of any particular man; therefore it is unlike in this respect Confucianism, Zoroasterism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity, each of which came through the teachings of one man from whom each received its name.

THE MATERIAL THAT MADE BRAHMANISM.

India was inhabited by these thinkers at least 1500 years before this religion was named. It is supposed that the immediate ancestors of the Grecians and the Romans left Asia about the same time that these, their brothers, migrated into India; and we cannot think that one part of this family went to the southwest to Europe, and the other to the southeast to India by mere chance, any more than we believe that the Israelites journeyed into Egypt without

the guidance of Providence. Abraham's ancestors were Indo-Aryans or Hindus. The Aryans who migrated to Europe were fighters, those who went to India were men of peace and men of deep thought. While ancient Europe is a continuous history of war and destruction, ancient India spends its time in quietly developing thought, schools of philosophy and systems of religion, and it will be discovered in the years to come that Pythagoras, the first Grecian philosopher, derived his ideas from Egypt, and that the Egyptians and Ishmaelites received their knowledge, as they did Joseph, from Asia. While the Grecians and Romans were putting their religious ideas into the concrete form of temple and dome, the early Hindus were becoming more subtle and abstract. "The conflict of the good and evil principles in nature rather than in history, is the prominent feature in the religion of the Aryans in India."

It was this tendency towards metaphysical speculation that led them into an infinitude of cloudy vagueness, rather than into the infinite God. Everything that could be wrought out by thought was produced by them. All the human religious systems of the world find their origin among the Himalayas. They worshiped the sun, and all their wealth of poetic imagery is employed to show forth his resplendent glory. Then followed their sidereal deities, and, Job-like, they pictured the beauties of Orion and Pleiades. They deified the calm, the storm, the day, the

night; then all the elements of nature became deities, till they blended into each other, and the universe became God, and God the universe. This is Pantheism.

After awhile they grew weary of such utter confusion and selected the most prominent features in nature, as the highest mountain, the largest forest; these they also deified, and thus was Polytheism developed.

Unlike the Mohammedans and Romans, no sensuality existed between their gods and goddesses.

“To the Aryans of India, nature is a chaste goddess, with star-crowned brow, of grave majesty and radiant smile, full of grace and grandeur in her changing manifestations. One feels the spell she weaves around him in the high and shining heavens, in the rapid rivers, in the vast plains and forest sanctuaries.”

At first they had no priests or temples; the head of each family and tribe led in the worship and sacrifice. The priesthood had its origin in a number of men who, like the men of Homer's day, went up and down the country singing the religious doctrines and rites of the people. It is very easy to see how these singers became the priests. Men who had a talent for singing, and at the same time good verbal memory, would naturally learn the hymns of the Rig Veda, and as it was a popular profession, it became lucrative. After a time, as the other classes were more interested in business, politics and philosophy, these singers would be more and more depended upon, and

finally they took possession of all the religious rites, thus developing their accursed hierarchical system. In order that their profession might be more secure to them, they made everything appertaining to religion ambiguous, that the rank and file of the people would become dependent upon them for religious information and interpretation. They introduced dark legends, mysterious myths, strange traditions, and equivocal aphorisms. They wrote commentaries, built schools, and employed vain philosophies to bewilder and delude the people. We cannot help perceiving how this complicated and oppressive ecclesiastical system resembles Roman Catholicism.

Max Muller gives the following metrical translation of their account of creation :

Nor Aught nor Naught existed; yon bright sky was not,
 Nor heaven's broad roof outstretched above.
 What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?
 Was it the water's fathomless abyss?
 There was no death—yet there was naught immortal;
 There was no confine betwixt day and night;
 The Only One breathed breathless by itself;
 Other than It there nothing since has been.
 Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled
 In gloom profound—an ocean without light—
 The germ that still lay covered in the husk
 Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.
 Then first came love upon it, the new spring
 Of mind—yet poets in their heart discerned,
 Pondering, this bond between created things
 And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth
 Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?

Then seeds were sown and mighty powers arose,
 Nature below, and power and will above;
 Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here?
 Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?
 The gods themselves came later into being—
 Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?
 He from whom all this great creation came,
 Whether his will created or was mute,
 The most High Seer that is in highest heaven,
 He knows it—or perchance even he knows not.

The priestly families to attract attention dressed their hair in a peculiar way; to gain influence they associated with the princes and rulers. When these Brahmans secured the desired power they worked out the distribution of castes. Then they destroyed the religion of their ancestors, and reduced the early gods of action to demons. In this, nature aided them. As the change of climate affected the Indo-Aryans, "their minds became dull and torpid under the burning sky, all militant thought disappeared," the war gods were forgotten, and the god of prayer, because he demanded no struggle or special exertion, became their favorite god, whom they called Brahma. Because of this deterioration the Vedic tongue became a dead language, the muse of poetry vanished, the brilliancy of thought and the purity of diction were unknown. Then followed the dark age of India.

The priests taught and the people believed that their religious ceremonies, rites and sacrifices, controlled the rising and setting of the sun, the prevailing of the winds,

seed time and harvest, life and death. To slight or neglect this worship would bring on disaster, sickness, pestilence, war and a horrible death. In this way were the minds and hearts and bodies of the people enslaved.

The Brahmans divided the literature into two parts, viz: the S'ruti, or revealed; the Smriti, or unrevealed. Both were intermingled and sub-divided into the Mantra, the Brahmana, and the Upanishad. To these, the laws of Manu have been appended. They burdened the mind with the following rules: The Kalpaor, the rules of the Mantra, and the Brahmana, the Siksha, or the rules of pronunciation, the C'handas, or the science of metre, the Nirukta, or the exposition of the Veda, the Vyakarana, or the rules of grammar. Scores, if not hundreds, of other formulæ could be mentioned. The Mantra related to the Vedic metre and hymnology. The Brahmanas were books showing the origin, cause, manner, method and object of sacrifices. Thousands of animals were sacrificed daily; the people were weary and sick of this ceremony; the day of re-action was not far distant. Buddha was coming to deliver them.

The Brahmanas encouraged the growth of a superstitious belief in the efficacy of sacrifices, and fostered increasing dependence upon the mediatorial castes of priests, supposed to be the constituted medium of communication between men and gods. But the Kshatrias, or soldier class, did not altogether submit to priestly tyranny.

Momentous questions were agitating the mind. No rest, no satisfaction, and no solution could be found in mere external rites; each thinker by the aid of reason was trying to solve the great problems of life. This led to the composing of the Upanishads. This work means the hidden, or what is read between the lines. It divides religion into two parts, that of works, and that of knowledge. The ignorant are saved by prayers, sacrifices, and austerities. The few are saved because of their intelligence they have discovered the secrets of the gods, of nature, and of man. The Upanishads are of them and for them. The books deal with the origin of the universe, the nature of the deity, the nature of the human soul, and the reciprocal connection of spirit and matter.

The Upanishads stated that the soul considered retrospectively and prospectively is eternal. Matter out of which the universe was evolved is eternal. The soul must be united to a body in order to exercise consciousness, sensation, cognition and action. The union of soul and body is productive of bondage and misery. To meet the consequences and maturity of acts the soul will be removed to a place of reward and punishment, which is not full, effectual or final. The transmigration of the soul caused the existence of evil.

While this free thought antagonized Brahmanism, still the priests being anxious to retain the patronage of the Kshatrias made this philosophy part of their religion.

Brahmanism thus contained two opposing forces, the one trammeling, the other emancipating the mind. Later on it fused Buddhism into itself, although this new religion was a protest against every rite and ceremony. Such is the mongrel character of Brahmanism as it now exists.

The laws of Manu relate to the usages of the home, of the relation of one caste to another, and to social customs. They teach that women have no rights, she is man's slave. Manu says there is as much difference between the four castes as exists between the lion, bear, tiger and the elephant. The first three castes were twice born. Their second birth takes place between the eighth and twelfth year. A religious ceremony is performed; they are then invested with the sacred cord, which is a coil of threads worn over the left shoulder, hanging down diagonally across the body to the right hip. The sacred cord of the Brahman is cotton; of the Kshatrias, hemp; of the Vaisyas, wool, and the Sudas have none, to show that they are accursed.

When death takes place the body is burned, and it is thought that the soul goes into a material form no larger than the thumb and hovers around the funeral pyre. If the body is not cremated the soul becomes a wandering ghost or ghoul. Rosaries containing scores of beads are used in prayer. Manu forbids the eating of flesh and fish and the drinking of spirituous liquors, except on solemn occasions.

History repeats itself: "What we the spirit of the ages call, is nothing but the spirit of us all." Wherein the ages are reflected, India has had its Huss, its Wickliff and its Luther. Buddha was India's great reformer.

Buddha and Buddhism.

THE term Buddhism is from the word Buddha, which means the wise, the enlightened, originating in the intelligence and wisdom of the founder of this system of religion. There are over fifty ways of spelling this name. Among the more common are Bud, Bod, Budh, Boodh, Budo, Buddow, Boutta, Poota, Poth, Pot, etc. The Chinese sound it like Fo, Foe, Foki. This indicates the cause of the various modes of different translators and commentators in spelling the name. Not until the middle of this century was much known about Buddhism.

Great credit is due to Mr. B. H. Hodgson the British resident to Nepal, one of the strongholds of Buddhism. He it was who discovered the canonical books written in Sanskrit. Since then it has been revealed that the Buddhist scriptures of Thibet, Mongolia and China are translations from those apparent original Sanskrit writings; also the books or scriptures of the Buddhists of Ceylon which are written in the Pali language agree in substance with

those Nepaulese standards. Translations from these books in the Pali language are used in Siam and Burmah.

Mr. B. H. Hodgson sent copies of the Nepaulese standards to the Asiatic Societies of London and Paris, and in 1884 the Oriental scholar, Eugene Burnouf, translated, published and gave them to the western world. We learn through this channel and others that Buddhism, like other Oriental religions, has had its day of myth, mystery and legend, with many a miracle to prove its supernatural origin. In fact these influences were at one time so potent as to lead so great a scholar as Prof. Wilson, of Oxford, to read a paper before the Royal Asiatic Society of London, in which he maintained that the supposed life of Buddha was a myth, and Buddha himself merely an imaginary being; but research and scholarship have placed Buddha on a historic and authentic foundation.

Buddhism originated in the northern part of Hindustan in the beginning of the Sixth century, B. C. It has now at least four hundred million adherents, and judging by this following, it is the greatest religion of the world.

This system arose out of the ethical and philosophical teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who was raja in Kapilavastu and chief of the tribe of the Sakyas, seated on the banks of the Kohana, about one hundred miles north of the city of Benares, and about fifty miles south of the foot of the Himalaya mountains. Gautama was of the Kshatriya class. It was noticed that in his childhood he was very

unlike this soldier class. He possessed a gentle nature, sensitive, if not morbid in spirit. Still nothing out of the ordinary was observed in this formative period of his life. His father, Suddhodana, fearing lest he might forsake the Kshatriya, through his morbid tendencies, encouraged his marriage to a princess at the age of sixteen years, that his mind might be withdrawn from himself, through the possibilities of home, social and civil life. Thirteen years after his marriage a son was born to brighten his domestic and heart life. But all the influences that could be brought to bear upon him could not divert his mind, or change the trend of his thought and life. His light could not be hid under a bushel. Fate, destiny and providence had carved out a road in which he was to travel, and, as all roads once led to the Roman city, so all influences seemed to lead him back to his life work.

As Dr. Ellinwood has truly said, "Though cribbed, cabined and confined," he saw enough of the world life—saw enough of suffering to sadden him, and he left the harem never to return. While it is true that there are many things said in the way of legend touching the causes which constrained Gautama to lead a new life, wholly unlike and antagonistic to the epicurean life which he so greatly relished as prince, which should be rejected as untrustworthy; still we are to remember that there were real causes, and that there is history in the midst of all this mystery, which it is the duty of the student to trace,

discover and expose, until its bare outline appears at least as evident as the pyramids on a clear day. Admitting that Gautama is an historic character, three things must have been present to him.

First, Gautama possessed a peculiarly sensitive, superior, sympathetic, ennobled and inspiring nature, as high above that of the ordinary Aryanas, the Himalay as were above the valley of the Ganges; and this lofty character, of necessity, made him, in the estimation of his inferiors, solitary and attractive.

In the second place there must have been something in the outside world to affect and draw out the inner man, the inner world; that is, there must have been objective reality as well as subjective impressions. Something like the following must have transpired: It is related that in his twenty-ninth year, while driving to his pleasure grounds one day, he was struck by the sight of a man utterly broken down by age; on another occasion by seeing a man suffering from a loathsome disease, and some months later by the horrible appearance of a decomposing corpse. Each time his charioteer, whose name was Chauna, told him such was the fate of all living beings. Soon after he saw an ascetic walking in a calm and dignified manner. Asking who that was he was again told by his charioteer the character and aims of ascetics. His mind and heart were deeply stirred by these sights without, and the vision they wrought up within. Gautama

doubtless saw that life was filled with vanity and vexation.

In the third place, the clash of these two worlds always leads to solitude and meditation, out of which men rise to be leaders and reformers, or sink into the dead levels of humanity, accepting all things as coming from the hand of fate to be acquiesced in, but not surmounted. The mind of this young Rajput took the higher course, and let us now follow him in his vicissitudes and struggles until he emancipates himself by herculean effort and Jacob-like wrestling.

On the banks of the Anoma, not far from the Koliyan provinces, he disrobed himself of the habiliments of his princely position, even to the cutting of his long, flowing hair, and spends seven days in grave communion with himself and nature. Then he visited Bimbisara, ruler of Magadha, who, pleased with Gautama's appearance and aims, invited him to become a teacher, but he hesitates, because of his unfitness. He afterward became the pupil of a Brahman philosopher by the name of Alara. Then he joined himself to the wise Udraka. From these and other teachers he learned all that could be taught him of the higher doctrines and ethics of the Hindu philosophy.

He, with his disciples and associates, retired to the jungle of Uruvela, on the northern spur of the Vindhya range of mountains, where for six long years he gave himself over to a life of the severest kind of austerity

till his fame as an ascetic of the ascetics spread far and wide; as stated in the Burmese chronicle, "his name was like the sound of a bell hung in the canopy of the skies." Through great physical weakness, caused by his self-torture and fasting, he fainted and fell to the ground, and by many was considered dead. This weak physical condition was a true indicator and exhibition of the inner state of his mind and spirit. As fasting had robbed him of his strength, so had this life of a recluse not only failed to furnish him with what he sought, but had deprived him of his faith, hope and aspiration. The aching void was within still, and life seemed an utter failure. He was further away from the end of his journey than when he commenced it. This state of unconsciousness seems to have transformed him into a new being, for from this moment his mode of life changed and he pursued a course diametrically opposite to that which had been pursued by him and others up to this time. He gave up his life of austerity and reversed his ideas of living to such an extent that his disciples considered him untrue to the doctrines of Brahmanism; capricious and exacting, they forsook him as unworthy of their company and counsel.

At this juncture came the great crisis of his life. As a great writer on Buddhism has well said: "There now ensued in Gautama's mind a second struggle, described in both southern and northern accounts with all the wealth of poetry and imagination of which the Indian mind is

master." While this account is too luxuriantly colored, still between the lines we see the real struggles of the man.

The simple history of that event is somewhat like the following: When he came to himself, consciousness having returned, feeling ahungered, he sought the banks of the Nairanjara, and as a mendicant begged his meal of Sujata, who lived in one of the villages near by. Leaving the maiden he found shelter beneath the umbrage of a large tree; which became noted in history as the sacred Bo-tree, or tree of wisdom. As a tree of the forest is exposed to the severe inclemency of the weather and climate when all other trees have been felled, so felt Gautama as he rested beneath this Bo-tree. In this moment of dire need, when the solace and consolation of friendship were so much to be desired, he was absolutely friendless and forsaken. For some unaccountable reason all had gone wrong, and yet he realized that he had lived up to the best light within and without him. To make sure that he had put forth his highest effort, he retraced, step by step, his past life of self-sacrifice and self-denial, and as the happy life of youth, of princely power and domestic felicity, in panoramic beauty passed before him, contrasting themselves with his present solitary and sad state, his strong imagination played upon them until they became intensely real. He was living over again his former happy life. It seems that these felicitous scenes had for the time elicited all his thoughts and affections, and the temptation was great to

give up his search for wisdom, purity and rest and go back and enjoy life; but finally his higher moral nature conquered, and as calm followed the storm, and light succeeds the night, so peace followed this internal tempest, and light and enlightenment overcame the doubts and ignorance of his being. He entered into the temptation a forsaken man and a bewildered Gautama, he emerged from the struggle enjoying Nirvana as the wise Buddha.

This made Buddha one of the greatest religious leaders the world has ever known. Great interest and ingenuity have been manifested by many scholars and philosophers in attempting to discover the different steps or stages by which he ascended out of his lower self to the pinnacle of an almost perfect deified human being. We will briefly consider them. T. W. Rhys Davis states Gautama's discovery and formula as follows :

“Everything corporeal is material, and therefore impermanent for it contains within itself the germs of dissolution. So long as man is bound up in bodily existence with the material world, he is liable to sorrow, death and decay. So long as he allows unholy desires to reign within him, there will be unsatisfied longings, useless weariness and care. To attempt to purify himself by oppressing the body would be only wasted effort. It is the moral evil of a man's heart which keeps him chained down in the degraded state of bodily life, of union with the material world. It is of little avail to add virtue to his badness, for

so long as there is evil, his goodness will only insure him for a time and in another birth a higher form of material life. Only the complete eradication of all evil will set him free from the chains of existence."

The foundations of his creed have been summed up in the following, which are called the Four Great Truths:

1st. That misery always accompanies existence.

2d. That all modes of existence result from passion or desire.

3d. That there is no escape from existence except by the destruction of desire.

4th. That this may be accomplished by following the fourfold way to Nirvana.

Of these four stages called the paths, the first is an awakening of the heart. When this is followed by the removing of all impure desires and all revengeful feelings, he has reached the second stage. In the third he successively becomes free from all desires, from all ignorance, from all heresy and from all unkindliness.

E. De Pressense, D.D., states the Buddhist formula and creed as follows. The four noble truths are:

1st. Suffering or sorrow. Birth causes sorrow; growth, decay, illness, death, all cause sorrow. Separation from objects we love, hating what cannot be avoided and craving what cannot be obtained, cause sorrow. Such states of mind as co-exist with the consciousness of individuality, with the sense of separate existence, are states of suffering and sorrow.

2d. The cause of suffering. The action of the outward world on the senses excites a craving thirst for something to satisfy them; or a delight in the objects presenting themselves, either of which is accompanied by the lust of life. These are the causes of sorrow.

3d. Cessation of sorrow. The complete conquest over, and destruction of this eager thirst, this lust of life, is that by which sorrow ceases.

4th. The path leading to the cessation of sorrow is the noble eight-fold path briefly summed up in the description of a virtuous life. At the head of the way of deliverance stands the middle path with its eight steps: (1) right belief, (2) right feelings, (3) right speech, (4) right actions, (5) right means of livelihood, (6) right endeavor, (7) right memory, (8) right meditation, by which man enters upon the noble path of deliverance which terminates in his exemption from all delusion.

He reaches this end by slow growth in passing through four stages or four phases of the spirit. The first is conversion; the second, the removal of doubts; the third, disbelief in the efficacy of rites and ceremonies. To be the recipient of these threefold blessings is considered a higher honor than the conquest of a city. The second is the path of those who will return but once to this world. The third is the path of those who will never return to this world. The fourth is the path of the holy and worthy ones, Arahats. This, the superlative state of life, leads directly to Nirvana. Gautama had passed while under

the Bo-tree through all these different graded states, climbing as it were from the lowest to the highest round of the ladder of human experience. Unaided by any supernatural power he rises by the force of self-reliance and aspiring efforts to that excellence of semi-divine perfection which has made him one of the finest and purest characters of profane or religious history.

It was certainly a glorious consummation, to attain to such a high elevation of human thinking. It is difficult for us to understand how a man without the aid of revelation could evolve such pure spiritual thought; and how a man like Gautama, so pessimistic over the sorrowful, degraded state of the world, could be so sympathetic and charitable, lenient and willing to sacrifice himself for the betterment of man's condition. It is certainly true that the genius of his heart was greater than the genius of his head. Legends and myths are as unnecessary and useless in ornamenting the brow of such a philanthropist, as pearls are to ornament the perfectly set diamond. We are informed that the moral perfection to which Gautama attained was due partly to the many transmigrations undergone by him. It is said he was born eighty-three times an ascetic, fifty-eight times a monarch, forty-three time a demi-god, twenty-four a Brahman, twenty-three a scholar, eighteen an ape, ten times a deer, ten a lion, six an elephant, six times born a snipe, five a colt, four a bull, once a tiger, once a thief, once a gambler, and once a frog. He

could not be born below a certain point of degradation. It was impossible to transmigrate through hell, through vermin, or to be born a woman.

If the Jattakes are true, we do not wonder that he excelled, for he passed through great tribulation in reaching Nirvana. He now became a man of marked decision of character and energetic action. The world was open to his sight; he heard the cry of the sorrowing, and felt he must enter upon his mission immediately. He desired to deliver the new gospel of self-help and triumph to his early teachers, Alara and Udraka, but they had ceased to live. Disappointed, he journeyed on to the deer forest near Benares, where he found those disciples who had formerly forsaken him. At first they received him haughtily and treated him coldly, but as he anticipated their actions, he bided his time. Finally, by his persistent patience and superior enlightenment, he not only won back their friendship, but converted them over to the new faith. They were inspired with his enthusiasm and spirit, and became like Buddha, itinerants, proclaiming the doctrines of Buddhism, till over two hundred embraced the principles of Gautama. The most ardent and capable among them was a young man of great wealth by the name of Lasa, who, next to his master, was the most efficient worker. He was the means of the conversion of his family and relatives, the effect of which was to give great prestige to the new religion. It was Gautama's custom to

send out his disciples two by two to instruct the sorrowing in the way of the middle path, by which they could become free from the "five passions, which like an immense net, held men and angels in their power." In the beginning of each rainy season they again collected themselves to sit at the feet of Gautama, to learn more of this new way of life, the highway to Nirvana. Not long after, he visited King Bimbisara, who yielded to Gautama's teachings and embraced his creed. Finally, Gautama entered his own native city as a mendicant. His Father Suddhodana received from his son the bowl and was converted. Then his wife, whom he had left long years before, with their first-born son nestling in her bosom, at their first meeting accepted his teachings, and against Gautama's will urged him to erect an edifice similar to the modern nunnery, of which she became the first nun.

Though he met with opposition, and though he endured much adversity, still his course in life during the forty-five years in which he preached his gospel of self-help, seemed to be one grand triumphal march to almost universal victory. Besides his charming doctrines, there were personal properties that endeared him to the people and aided him in his successful campaign. He was a man of commanding presence, possessing a deep, rich voice. He was convinced of the truth of his doctrines, and had the courage of his convictions, and earnestly and affectionately sought the conversion of the common people. Gautama

died at the age of eighty-one, an ordinary human death. The following account of his death is tolerably clear and trustworthy. In a grove at Parva, between Kusingara and Kapilavastu, Benares, Gautama died. He had eaten some indigestible food, which hastened his death. His conversation during his last lingering hours suggests to us the philosophical thoughts of Socrates, and also reminding us, too, of the last words of Jesus Christ to His disciples on the nature and necessity of the possession and practice of love and charity.

Gautama dies, not like a god, but like a man, who is conscious that he has done what he could in the ennobling of his character, through his active sympathy for his fellow-man, in fitting himself for this supreme moment of his life. Death became the stepping-stone into Nirvana, the goal of his existence and continued struggle.

Buddhism and Christianity.

NO better modern authority can be cited as to the origin of Buddhism than Dr. F. F. Ellinwood, who states that about 511, B. C., there arose a general protest of various philosophical or rationalistic schools, against the priestly tyranny of Brahmanism, over the intellectual and moral life of the nation. Buddhism was

found among these systems. It placed against the Brahminical caste distinctions, the doctrine of the equality of all men. It placed against the doctrine of animal sacrifice, which had been so rife in India, over which the priests had gone mad, slaying thousands of animals daily, the thought that the penalty of sin could not be transferred to another. The actor must suffer or enjoy the consequences flowing from his every action. There was no such thing as vicarious suffering. There was no place for prayer in Buddhism. Self-mortification and abstract meditation led to Nirvana. The Buddhist ignored the existence of the soul-spirit as separate from the material organism, hence there was no such thing as a supreme spirit. The gods were merely orders of beings.

The *summum bonum* of Buddhism is the suppression of all action in order to avoid the consequences of actions which cause sorrow. A state of absolute quietude to a large extent is the Nirvana of the Buddhist. The destruction of sorrow through asceticism and not by priestly tyranny and servile obedience, met the condition and demand of the age. It was a timely protest and reformation, and for that reason became exceedingly popular with the common people of India. There were many valuable and somewhat practical precepts, prohibitions and doctrines for the daily conduct.

Sorrow, the common heritage of all, the galling yoke and burden of life, was to be destroyed by the eight

methods, right perception, thinking, words, acts, regimen, study, memory and meditation. Murder, theft, lying, adultery and drunkenness were strictly prohibited. The members of the Sangha were not to offend in diet, not to indulge in amusements, not to wear ornaments or use perfumes, not to sleep on soft, luxurious beds, and not to amass silver or gold. Whatever anti-Christian apologists of the West may say as to the origin and unique intrinsic merits of this so-called decalogue, scholarly men have conclusively shown that they bear no comparison to the divine excellence of the ten commandments. They possess no spirituality; they recognize no Deity, or future relation of man to his Creator. They give out as little heat as do the cold stars on a winter night. Whatever light they have is as the dim reflection of the distant rays of a sun that has sunk far below the horizon. The exceeding darkness of the age gives their pale glow a strange brilliancy. As the drowning man will grasp and endeavor to cling to the slightest thing, which he imagines will keep him from sinking so did these Hindus cleave to these maxims which in their time were the very best that were available, and from a human point of view were meritorious and ennobling.

The doctrines of Buddhism spread rapidly over India and the adjacent isles, until hundreds of thousands professed themselves followers of Buddha. The Brahmans instead of persevering in their antagonism, true to their cur-

ning character, created a fusion by which, to all appearance, Buddhism, which was a protest against Brahmanism, became identified with it, and from that time the history of the one is largely the history of the other. It is marvellous how the doctrines of this dualistic Buddhism have been promulgated in the Eastern and even in the Western world. Not only can Buddhists be found in the entire Orient, but in most, if not all, the great cities of the west may be found large circles of people who claim to be Buddhists.

Through all its changes and stages Buddhism has overlooked the existence of God; has ignored the efficacy of prayer, denied the reality of disembodied spirits and shows no conception of the character and demerit of sin. Therefore there is no room in their system for a Saviour. The trend is toward fatalism and pessimism. Buddhism is not the twilight of the morning leading to the greater light of day, but it is as the evening twilight which deepens into darkness.

The Nirvana of Buddhism has never been satisfactorily defined. Each school of philosophy and each nation of Buddhists hold to some idea or doctrine, which is not only unlike the tenets held by all the other followers, but directly in antagonism. Translators differ in their conclusions as to what is meant by Nirvana. Buddha himself, being an atheist and much of a fatalist, could not have considered Nirvana as a place where the immortal good

dwell in conscious peace. Then again the people who became Buddhists always held to the ideas taught in the systems of religious truths regarding monotheism, immortality and the efficacy of prayer, as found in the different provinces and nations. Apparently there was no doctrine common to all Buddhists.

The term Nirvana means "to blow out." If we follow this etymology, everything which produces existence or sensation would be destroyed. In Nirvana there is no wish either to live or to die, as all desire is extinguished. It is not absorption but cessation of being. If we follow the metaphysics of the earliest scholarly Buddhists, including Gautama, Nirvana is a place or state of such absolute passiveness, repose and unconsciousness as could only be produced by annihilation.

If we follow the beliefs of the different people, it is a sort of semi-heaven, originating in the native longing of the human soul after some better condition beyond the grave than that endured here. It is surprising with what rapidity this system spread. We are astonished to learn that Buddhism was the first missionary religion known in history. All others excluded the missionary idea. Says Muller: "No Jew, no Greek, no Roman, no Brahman, ever thought of converting people to his own national form of worship. Religion was looked upon as a private and national property. It was to be guarded against strangers. The most sacred names of the gods, the prayers by which

their favors could be gained, were kept secret. Not even the lowest caste Brahmans, the Sudras, would open their ranks to a stranger. Buddha addressed both caste and outcaste; he promised salvation to all. The doctrine of the brotherhood of humanity was first pronounced in India by this Raja. In the year 308, B. C., missionaries were sent to the chief countries beyond India.

The spirit of humanity and toleration exhibited by King Asoka years before the Christian era is not only worthy of mention but also of emulation. He said, "A man ought to honor his own faith only, but he should never abuse the faith of others. It is thus that he will do no harm to anyone. There are even circumstances where the religion of others ought to be honored, and in acting thus a man fortifies his own faith and assists the faith of others. He who acts otherwise diminishes his own faith and hurts the faith of others." How admirable are such noble sentiments, uttered over two thousand years ago by a heathen king. Mrs. Speir, in her work, "Life in Ancient India," states: "Buddhism spread in the south to Ceylon, in the north to Kashmir, the Himalayan countries, Thibet and China. One Buddhist missionary is mentioned in the Chinese annals as early as the year 217 B. C."

Buddhism, in A. D. 66, was officially recognized by Ming-ti as a state religion, and placed on an equal footing with the religion of Confucius and Lao-tse. This missionary spirit doubtless hastened the spread of Buddhism, and

also accounts for its wonderful success and permanence. This faith has over four hundred millions of converts, while Protestant Christianity, including all who hold a nominal relation to the church, claims less than one hundred and fifty millions. This numerical increase of Buddhism over Christianity is the more remarkable when we take into account that its author was merely a human being, while the author of Christianity is divine. We devoutly believe that in the not far-distant future the figures and the material strength of each of these will be more than merely reversed. As these two systems are progressive and aggressive and as Christianity is now being pushed into the domains and strongholds of Buddhism, the day will surely come when both will meet as do opposing fires in a burning forest. Which will consume and survive the other, from our enthusiastic point of view, is easy to predict, and yet the followers of Gautama are just as sanguine of success as are the disciples of Christ. Their hopefulness is pardonable and well founded, since during the long past they have so triumphantly withstood all the advances of Christian missions and the progress of Christian and modern civilization. But as in the fullness of time Gautama reached out after something superior to Brahmanism to satisfy his unsatisfied moral nature, so in the progress of events when a greater fullness of time shall come, these noble but benighted minds, through a consciousness of the insufficiency of their religion, will long

for something higher. Then will they accept the Christ. Since the Aryan mind is monotheistic by nature, there must be a re-action against Buddhism and a favoring of a belief in one supreme being.

It is the duty of the church to advance, to contribute, to preach, to work and then to wait for that notable day to come when the Lord shall gather his ransomed into his fold. It needs no miracle to bring to pass such a reformation. For who can read the history of the life of Buddha, the rise, success and wide spread of his religion, without feeling that if the church and the times will furnish a man equal to him in intellect, purity of heart, aspiration of soul, with equal sincerity and sympathy, who receives not enlightenment under the fig tree but by the power of the Holy Ghost, that such a man would more than meet the emergency of the hour by transforming, through conversion, the creed of the Buddhist into a saving belief in the Gospel of the New Testament. Why this man of destiny has not as yet come forth is difficult to answer. The delay can hardly be providential, since *now* is God's accepted time and day of salvation. He is willing *now* to give the kingdom to his little flock. What the church and times need is a great heroic spirit like a Hannibal who considers no Alpine difficulty insurmountable; one who can smile at impossibilities and cry, it shall be done; one who, like Joshua, filled to overflowing with the zeal of optimism, will take possession of the enemy's country.

Too many ministers and members of the Christian church who hear of the success and progress of missions in distant lands are like the ten spies who came laden down with the fruit of Eshcol, but with hearts barren of faith in God and hope for the future. All such retard the day of glorious consummation when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God. We cannot help perceiving through these Oriental leaders of religious thought, that God has never forsaken these so-called heathen, and it is evident that He has never entirely withdrawn His spirit from them. The Heavenly Father is moving upon the hearts of his children to go and seek these prodigal races.

May the day soon come when these Buddhists shall know for a surety that there is a God, that there is efficacy in prayer, that disembodied spirits exist beyond this world of death, that the penalty of sin can be transferred, the consciousness of guilt removed, and that the Son of God sacrificed Himself once for all, to redeem all who call by faith upon His name. Then, when this is realized, will the brightest and greatest light that has ever shone upon India brighten the valleys, plains and mountains of this pre-historic country.

